DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 552 FL 026 441

TITLE	Languages: The Next Generation. The Final Report and Recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry.
INSTITUTION	Nuffield Foundation, London (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-902985-02-8
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	104p.
AVAILABLE FROM	The English Company (UK) Ltd., 2 Western Road, Wolverton, Milton Keynes MK12 5AF UK (9.50 British pounds; CD-ROM: ISBN-1-902985-03-6, 12.50 British pounds). Fax: 0198-310372; http://www.english.co.uk.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Language Planning; *National Programs; Public Policy; *Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning
IDENTIFIERS	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This report examines the United Kingdom's (UK) capability in foreign languages and reports on what the nation should do to improve the situation. It is argued that despite the fact that English is rapidly becoming an even more dominant language in the world--it is clearly the international language of science, law, banking, business, technology--knowing only English is not enough. Capability in other languages is critically important for a flourishing UK. The learning of other languages should become more institutionalized into the educational and social structure of the country, and this requires a coherent national strategy for the promotion of the learning of other languages. The report is divided into three parts. Part one examines the present state of foreign language learning in the UK and the trends that make it clear that there is a growing inadequacy in the national capacity in other languages. A national framework for thinking about language needs is provided. Part two looks in detail at the present state of the language learning infrastructure and resources in the UK, dividing the inquiry into education to age 16 and education after age 16. Specific recommendations for building on and improving this state of affairs are made. Part three focuses on making the case for a much more comprehensive and vigorous national effort to promote the learning of other languages while making several very detailed and specific recommendations. Appendices include references and a listing of the individuals and organizations involved in producing this report. (KFT)

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